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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 004425

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARPI, INR/B

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/19/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KU](#)

SUBJECT: SHARAR GRILLING MEANT TO SEND OFFICIAL MESSAGE ON
CORRUPTION

REF: A. KUWAIT 4407

[B](#). KUWAIT 4219

[C](#). KUWAIT 3391

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) A senior advisor to Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah told Poloff December 15 that the December 6 grilling of Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Mohammed Dhaifallah Sharar (ref b) had been engineered by the government in an attempt to "send a message" to members of the royal family who are engaged in corrupt activities. Specifically, the advisor said that one of the sons of National Guard Chief Shaykh Salem Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Sabah was the intended recipient of the message, which he cryptically paraphrased as "don't play with fire." (Note: Although the advisor did not say which son, Shaykh Salem has three prominent sons: Ali, a former Minister of Finance and Communication and the majority stakeholder in the Commercial Bank of Kuwait on behalf of his father; Fahad, the Director General of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fisheries Resources, which was criticized as a corrupt organization during Sharar's grilling; and Ahmed, the Chairman and Managing Director of the Securities Group Company, a financial brokerage house. Ali and Ahmed are known to be heavily involved in trading at the Kuwait Stock Exchange. End Note.)

[1](#)2. (C) Responding to Poloff's question about the recent spate of publicity on corruption issues, the advisor said that the GOK was undertaking a campaign to expose corruption in Kuwait at the behest of the Prime Minister.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: Although it may be true that the GOK is undertaking a campaign to expose corruption, it is likely that the campaign is extremely limited in scope and is fueled as much by family rivalry as by altruism. Shaykh Sabah is no great friend of Shaykh Salem's, especially after the latter's public attempts to raise his profile (refs a and c). Additionally, Shaykh Sabah's sons, like Shaykh Salem's, are some of the wealthiest in the country and have themselves been accused of corruption. That the government may have engineered a grilling to prove a point is more significant, as it shows the lengths to which Shaykh Sabah will go to avoid direct conflict -- even with family rivals that his advisors insist have little influence.
LEBARON